

Federal indictments for its cash management practices, Exxon Valdez after an oil spill in Alaska, and Procter and Gamble after rumors circulated that the company's moon-and-stars logo was a satanic symbol: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) acknowledges the lifelong service of Griffin Boyette Bell to the State of Georgia and the United States as a legal icon; and

(2) commends Griffin Boyette Bell for his tenure as Attorney General of the United States and his commitment to the American Civil Rights Movement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I will yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we honor the lifelong service of Griffin Boyette Bell to the legal profession and to the American civil rights movement. I want to thank Representative JACK KINGSTON of Georgia for introducing this fitting tribute to one of Georgia's native sons.

Griffin Bell was born in 1918 in rural Sumter County, the son of a cotton farmer. His family relocated to Americus, the county seat, when the advance of the boll weevil devastated cotton crops.

Griffin Bell excelled at school and for a while attended Georgia Southwestern College and worked in his father's successful tire shop. When duty called in 1942, Griffin enlisted in the U.S. Army serving in the Quartermaster Corps, the Transportation Corps, where he rose to the rank of Major.

After the Army, he attended Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, graduating with honors. While still in law school, he was appointed city attorney of Warner Robins, Georgia. He practiced law in both Savannah and Rome, Georgia, eventually joining the Atlanta law firm now known as King and Spalding.

In 1959, he returned to public service as chief of staff to Governor Ernest Vandiver. One of his responsibilities was helping guide the State of Georgia in implementing the Supreme Court's *Brown versus Board of Education* decision requiring that public schools be desegregated—which was a matter that was creating public and political tensions throughout the South.

Working with the blue-ribbon Sibley Commission that he organized, he navi-

gated a steady but incremental approach which helped Georgia implement the *Brown* decision without the school closings and other public rancor experienced elsewhere.

Griffin Bell's handling of this and other matters for Governor Vandiver brought him to the attention of President Kennedy, who appointed him in 1961 to the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which used to incorporate the State of Georgia, but now Georgia is in the 11th Circuit.

In addition, among the many cases he dealt with during his 14 years on the bench were numerous school desegregation cases throughout the States from Texas to Georgia and Florida where he worked with a great deal of success to ensure that the *Brown* mandate was carried forward resolutely, but also with the cooperation and support of school boards and local communities whenever possible.

I had the opportunity to practice before the Fifth Circuit to promote civil rights on many occasions, including one case where I represented the NAACP in a voting rights case. In that case, the NAACP was denied an application to conduct voter registration drives. The court decided that the city could not prevent the NAACP from conducting voter registration drives if this would have a discriminatory effect, a decision which might not have been possible had lawyers and judges like Griffin Bell not had the courage to stand up for civil rights over the course of decades.

Judge Bell retired from the bench in March of 1976 only to be called back to public service soon thereafter by President-elect Jimmy Carter, who nominated him to be Attorney General of the United States. He was instrumental in restoring morale and public confidence at a Justice Department whose reputation had been severely damaged by Watergate. And he helped greatly increase the representation of women and minorities on the Federal bench.

Judge Bell returned to King and Spalding in 1979, but he remained active in public affairs not only in his community, but in national and international affairs as well.

He had barely left the Justice Department when President Carter appointed him to lead the U.S. delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Two years later, he served as co-Chair of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Violent Crime, and in 1985, he accepted the position on the Secretary of State's advisory committee on South Africa. In 1989, the first President Bush appointed him to be vice chairman on the Commission on Federal Ethics Law Reform. In 2004 at age 86, he was commissioned as a Major General in the United States Army to serve as chief judge on the appeals court for reviewing military commission trials of enemy combatants.

To fully list the many positions Judge Bell held and the many ways he

served his community and his country and the world would take more time than we have here today. Last fall, his historical essays were published in a book called "Footnotes to History."

Griffin Bell was anything but a footnote to history. His advancement of civil rights and commitment to the rule of the law will continue to be an inspiration to the many who worked with him, who knew him, and who will read about him in years to come.

I am proud that today we celebrate his many accomplishments and honor his life.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I support House Resolution 71 which acknowledges the lifelong service of Griffin Bell to the State of Georgia and, of course, to the United States.

Griffin Bell was the son of a cotton farmer, and he rose to become one of the most respected legal counselors in the whole United States. He was appointed by President Kennedy to serve as a judge on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. He left the court after 14 years of service on that bench to rejoin the law firm of King and Spalding.

In 1986, President Jimmy Carter nominated him to become the Attorney General of the United States. In that role, Judge Bell operated in a remarkably open manner that has not been duplicated since.

Every day, he would publicly post his contacts with third parties, including meetings and calls from the White House, Members of Congress, and others outside the Justice Department. His efforts to strengthen transparency of his office did much to rebuild confidence in the Justice Department after the Watergate scandal.

As Attorney General, Judge Bell led the effort to pass the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978. At the time, he gave testimony to Congress in which he made clear that the legislation "does not take away the power of the President under the Constitution."

Judge Bell also led negotiations that resulted in dividing his former appellate courts into two circuits: the Fifth Circuit, based in New Orleans, and the 11th Circuit, based in Atlanta.

Judge Bell was known for his love of rooster pepper sausage and for his wide and bold-colored ties. He was a figure full of personality as he was wise, and greatly respected by Members of both sides of the political aisle.

Judge Bell passed away earlier this year on January 5, 2009. He and his sage advice and his opinions will be missed.

As a former judge and prosecutor, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution to honor the life of Judge Bell, a man committed to justice because, Mr. Speaker, justice is what we do in America.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.